

Digitalis.—MACKENZIE (*Heart*, 1911, ii, 273), in a long article, reports 43 cases of various cardiac affections treated with digitalis. Each case is presented with a wealth of clinical details regarding, particularly, the effects produced by the administration of digitalis. Mackenzie draws the following conclusions from his detailed study of these cases: The careful analysis of the symptoms of patients to whom digitalis has been administered brings out the fact that individuals react differently to the drug. So far as the heart is concerned, the difference is partly dependent on the nature of the lesion with which the heart is affected. Patients with auricular fibrillation are more readily and more markedly affected than patients with the normal rhythm. Digitalis, in a proportion of patients with normal rhythm, affects the auriculoventricular bundle more particularly, producing partial heart block. It is suggested that the susceptibility of patients with auricular fibrillation may result from the tendency of digitalis to affect the bundle, the change in the auricular condition rendering the bundle more susceptible to the influence of the digitalis. It is possible that in slowing the heart's rate the digitalis acts by stimulating the vagus nerve. Digitalis tends to induce auricular fibrillation. In two cases of tachycardia, arising from an abnormal source, digitalis caused the heart to revert to a normal rhythm, first inducing fibrillation of the auricle. The diuretic effects of digitalis may be produced with no perceptible change in the heart.

Clinical Observations on the Physiological and Therapeutic Action of Large Doses of Radium Emanation.—VON NOORDEN and FALTA (*Med. Klinik*, 1911, vii, 1487) believe that large doses of radium are only indicated in certain forms of acute articular rheumatism in which both large doses and prolonged sittings seem to be most efficient. In all other diseases v. Noorden and Falta advise beginning with small doses and then gradually increasing them. Large doses of radium should be given to nervous patients only with the greatest caution. They believe that radium has a profound effect upon the body metabolism, and cite their findings to support this view. In their opinion treatment by radium emanations is best carried out in institutions, since a strict régime and care as to details of the treatment aid its beneficial effects. It is probable that many of the beneficial effects obtained at certain spas may be explained by the baths containing more or less radium in its natural state.

The Action of Heart Remedies.—LA FRANCA (*Zeit. f. Exper. Path. und Therap.*, 1911, ix, 427) from his own experimental and clinical observations has formulated the therapeutic action of various heart remedies in relation to their effects upon the irritability, conductivity and contractility of the heart muscle. He says that contractility of the cardiac muscle is increased by digitalis, spartein, convallaria and cactus grandiflora. On the other hand, strychnine, caffeine, sodium bromide and sodium iodide have no influence upon this property of the cardiac muscle. The irritability of the heart muscle is lessened by both digitalis and cactus. The irritability and the conductivity are both increased by convallaria, strychnine, caffeine, sodium bromide and sodium iodide.